



Military Service Credit

This publication relates to the following retirement systems:

Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS) Plans 2 & 3
School Employees' Retirement System (SERS) Plans 2 & 3
Teachers' Retirement System (TRS) Plans 2 & 3
Public Safety Employees' Retirement System (PSERS) Plan 2
Law Enforcement Officers' and Fire Fighters' Retirement System (LEOFF) Plan 2
Washington State Patrol Retirement System (WSPRS) Plan 2

What is interruptive military service credit?

Interruptive military service credit is available to those who interrupt their membership with any of the following Department of Retirement Systems (DRS)-covered systems to serve in the United States Armed Forces:

- PERS Plan 2 or Plan 3
- SERS Plan 2 or Plan 3
- TRS Plan 2 or Plan 3
- PSERS Plan 2
- LEOFF Plan 2
- WSPRS Plan 2

These systems and plans allow members to purchase retirement service credit for interruptive military service.

The distribution of military service credit is governed by both state and federal laws. If you completed your military service after October 5, 1994, federal law will be applied to your case.

If you completed your military service before October 6, 1994, state law will be applied to your case, unless you are seeking more than the maximum amount of service credit allowed under state law. Those seeking more than the state maximum may qualify for additional service credit if they meet federal requirements.

Am I eligible to receive interruptive military service credit?

To purchase military service credit under either state or federal law, you must:

- Leave PERS, SERS, TRS, PSERS, LEOFF, or WSPRS-covered employment to serve in the military;
- Render military service in one of the armed or uniformed services of the United States; and
- Upon termination of military service, return to employment covered by your original retirement system within statutorily defined time limits.



What if I die or become disabled as a result of military service?

Effective July 24, 2005, a member who becomes totally incapacitated for continued employment as a result of service in the uniformed services of the United States, or the surviving spouse or eligible children of a member who dies while serving in the uniformed services of the United States may apply for interruptive military service credit. The member or eligible spouse or children would pay only the employee contributions. Contact DRS for more information.

What qualifies as military service?

Most types of military service qualify members to purchase military service credit. They include:

- Service in the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, or their Reserve units;
- Full-time service in the United States Coast Guard;
- Service in the Public Health Service; and
- Service in the Army or Air National Guard provided to the federal government, but not including service provided to a state.

How much military service credit can I purchase?

The maximum amount of military service credit you can purchase varies as follows:

- For military service completed on or after October 6, 1994 — You are allowed to purchase up to five years of military service credit.
- For military service completed on or before October 5, 1994 — The maximum amount of service credit you are allowed to purchase is based upon the type of military service rendered:
 - If you enlist in the Armed Forces (other than a Reserve component), you are entitled to a maximum of five years.
 - If you entered active duty in the Armed Forces or the Public Health Service in response to an order or call to active duty, you are entitled to a maximum of four years.
 - If you are a member of a Reserve component of the Armed Forces who voluntarily or involuntarily entered active duty, you are entitled to a maximum of four years.

Under certain circumstances you may purchase service credit for periods of interruptive military service that exceed the maximums stated above. For further information, contact DRS.

What are the time limits for re-employment?

To qualify to purchase military service credit, you must apply for work with an employer covered by your original retirement system within a specified amount of time following the conclusion of your military service. The factors that determine how long you have to initiate re-employment are:

- The date service was completed,
- The type and duration of military service performed, and
- Whether the service was performed in the Armed Forces or the Reserves.

For more information, contact a DRS retirement services analyst.

If you fail to initiate re-employment within a required time frame, or fail to pay your employee contribution within five years of returning to service, you have the option of purchasing service credit by paying the actuarial value of the resulting increase in your benefit.

How much am I required to pay?

The date that the interruptive military service was completed is important for determining whether you or your employer is responsible for making the required contributions:

- For military service completed on or after October 6, 1994 - You must pay the employee contributions (no interest), and your employer must pay the employer contributions plus interest.
- For military service completed on or after March 31, 1992, and before October 6, 1994 - You must pay the employee contributions plus interest, and your employer must pay the employer contributions plus interest.
- For military service completed on or after October 1, 1977, and before March 31, 1992 - You must pay both the employer and employee contributions plus interest.

You must make the required contributions within five years of resuming service with your employer or prior to retirement, whichever comes first. If you fail to pay for military service credit within the five-year limit, you have the option of purchasing service credit by paying the actuarial cost of the resulting increase in your benefit.

How do I contact DRS?

To find out if you are eligible to receive interruptive service credit, send your request for a determination along with documentation of your military service, such as a DD214 form to your retirement system for review.

Address: Department of Retirement Systems
Name of system (PERS, SERS, TRS, PSERS, LEOFF or WSPRS)
P.O. Box 48380
Olympia WA 98504-8380

Call Toll Free: 1-800-547-6657 / TDD: 1-866-377-8895

Olympia area: (360) 664-7000 / TDD: (360) 586-5450

E-mail: *recep@drs.wa.gov*

Web site: *www.drs.wa.gov*

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Summary Description

The actual provisions governing military service credit are contained in state retirement law. This publication is a summary of those provisions, not a complete description of the law. If there are any conflicts between what is written in this publication and what is contained in the law, the applicable law will govern.